

PEOPLE & THINGS

NOT counting Beria and his dead associates, the following high Soviet authorities have been shot as spies and traitors, with or without trial, since the Revolution:

Nine out of eleven Cabinet Ministers of the Soviet Government holding office in 1936.

Five out of seven Presidents of the last Central Executive Committee of the Soviets.

Forty-three out of the fifty-three Secretaries of the Central Organisation of the Party.

Nearly all Secretaries of the Party provincial organisations.

Fifteen out of the twenty-seven leading Communists who had drafted the 1936 Soviet Constitution.

Seventy out of the eighty members of the Soviet War Council.

Three out of every five of the Marshals of the Soviet Army.

About sixty per cent. of all Soviet Generals.

Over eighty per cent. of the Secretaries of the government trade-union organisations.

All members of Lenin's first post-revolution Politburo (the Soviet Inner Cabinet in 1917), with the exception of Stalin.

All members of the Party Politburo as constituted after Lenin's death, again with the exception of Stalin.

(Quoted from "What Happens to Communists?" Batchworth Press, 1s. 6d.)

Eureka

THE Minister of Transport, grappling with London's traffic problems, may find a Happy New Year message in these words of an exasperated New York taxi-driver: "I'd have the Mayor call out every car and truck in New York, one day, and when they've got everything locked tight, pour concrete over the lot, and start from there. I'd raise the riding level, but it would be quick."

"Ghost Writers Ltd."

THE news that Lord Ismay has agreed to remain as Secretary-General of N.A.T.O. until next November reminded me of his war-time secretary, Miss Joan Bright, one of the most attractive and intelligent girls in the Cabinet Offices. Now, as Lady Astley, she has started "Writers and Speakers Research" in partnership with an assistant in the war-time Naval Intelligence Division, Mrs. Joan Saunders, the widow of Hilary St. George Saunders. Briefly, they undertake research work for authors in any country and on any subject. In their first week they started on the origin of some thirteenth-century seals in the Bibliothèque Nationale and on a fictional secret weapon for a thriller writer. Between them they had already done basic research for the official Life of Lord Trenchard and two regimental histories. Since they advertise that no task is too trivial for them there is one scribe who is looking forward to a carefree 1954.

By ATTICUS



The Kauffer Magic

E. MCKNIGHT KAUFFER is still the greatest magician in pictorial design and those who remember his famous posters for Shell and London Transport will be interested to see an example, unfortunately without the brilliant colours, of his work for the New York Subway. "Ted" Kauffer lived and worked in London for twenty-seven years and, though an American, was one of the first of the few to be appointed R.D.I. (Royal Designer in Industry). Today we can see his work only in the files of the Victoria and Albert or in prized copies of the Nonesuch Press "Anatomy of Melancholy" and "Don Quixote," but I am sure Sir Hugh Casson and others would agree that his romantic abstractions were one of the basic influences behind the evolution of "Festival British."

Invitation Inevitable

AMERICA, since he returned in 1941, has been slow to recognise his extraordinary gifts. Wryly he complains that American advertisers are obsessed by two themes—Sex Appeal and Keeping Up With the Joneses. "We're on a one-way street with everyone thinking about mink coats and such nonsense and rushing out to buy success books at \$3.98. The trouble with this country is that it's security-mad. I never heard the word 'security' in England, nor 'I work too hard' or 'My feet hurt.' You hear them all the time here. I'm going back to London one day even if it means being investigated by Senator McCarthy."

Gold and —

IN company with many million people throughout the world I have just assisted at the birth of a myth. I suppose fictions are born every day, but it is interesting to catch oneself red-handed and try to get the facts into the glass-case and the falsehoods into the killing-bottle before, as with Pilt-down, bogus history is written.

Since the Queen's visit to

Jamaica, we have all taken to our hearts a new hero, Warren Kidd, the simple Negro who laid his coat before the Queen and was roughly seized and hustled off to the police station. Many of us applauded the seven M.P.s from all parties who cabled a day later to "Raleigh" Kidd: "We are sorry that for the moment your generous intentions were misunderstood. We should like to thank you on behalf of many British citizens for your courteous action." Most of the world was left with the romantic picture of a poor, misunderstood Uncle Tom whose charming gesture to our Queen had been punished by heavy-handed officialdom.

— Pinchbeck

NOW, the facts are correct, but, sad to relate, on closer examination the romantic picture dissolves.

It turns out that this was a cool-headed stunt by the representative of a political party whose aims include independence for Jamaica and severance of her link with the British Crown. Under the title "No Raleigh He," the "West Indian Review" observes that Warren Kidd is a member of Mr. Manley's Labour Party and that he is standing for election to the House of Representatives next year. Far from being a poor schoolmaster, as was first reported, he is in fact the managing director of a private school. The writer adds: "He is forty-two years old, father of seven children, all of whom he assures me are delighted with his exploit at Port Royal. Mr. Kidd, not that you will care, I am not." I should add that the "West Indian Review" is a Liberal, just and thoroughly responsible journal.

A Fairy Tale

A PENNILESS student spent his days searching for truth in the Vatican Library in Rome. Wearily he was ploughing through the dusty tomes of a minor philosopher who died 170 years ago when, at the end of the last volume, he came upon a sheet of paper on which was written "The finder of this is advised to go to the Probate Court and examine File 162. R./Home, February 5, 1784." The student went to the court and took out the file. The philosopher had left his entire fortune, £300,000, to the first person sufficiently interested in his works to read them to the end.

(I am told that this story is old and untrue, but I think it deserves retelling during Christmas week.)

Cardmanship

YOU are playing bridge with a player who hogs the bidding and obstinately refuses to let you have a chance of playing a hand. You are playing the Strong Two convention. Your partner opens with Two Hearts. No bid on your right. You hold all thirteen Clubs. Psychologically, what is your best bid, knowing that even if you bid your certain grand slam in Clubs your partner will inevitably take you out into Hearts?

You should bid One Club.

The penalty for this undercall is that you have to make your bid good, and no further bid is allowed from your partner.

So you then say sorry and bid Grand Slam in Clubs.

This lethal gambit is known as the "Borgia Convention."